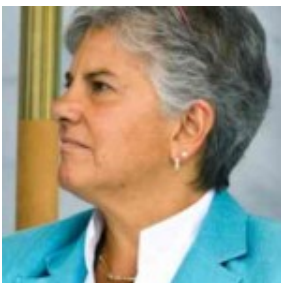


Opinion: Snowfall a good sign for Tahoe

By Joanne Marchetta

The New Year is getting off to a phenomenal start with snow falling at Lake Tahoe. It seems long ago since we've had snow around the lake, but as California and Nevada continue to grapple with four years of drought and water shortages, the snow couldn't be falling at a better time.

A snow survey this January by California Department of Water Resources found 54 inches of snow at Echo Summit. That's 16 inches above average for this time of year. And it's significantly more snow than we saw last April when the snowpack is usually at its greatest but surveyors found no accumulated snow on the ground.



Joanne
Marchetta

The first snowy winter in years is boosting Lake Tahoe's economy, bringing tourists to our ski resorts and hotels. That's welcome news for many people in our communities who depend on winter recreation for their livelihood.

But the snow is benefitting more than our businesses and skiers. A strong storm that hit the Sierra several weeks ago dropped more than 4 billion gallons of water into Lake Tahoe, quickly raising the lake's level by 2 inches. The lake is

still more than a foot below its natural rim, but the storm showed how our lake and parched forests stand to benefit from this return of winter weather.

An El Nino system in the Pacific Ocean promises to bring more heavy precipitation to California in the months to come—perhaps even too much precipitation for some communities bracing for mudslides and flooding. But as much-needed snow and rain fall on our region for the first time in years, we must not grow complacent about our need to adapt to a changing climate.

Just a few days after this month's heartening snow survey at Echo Summit, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that 2015 was the second hottest year on record for the United States. NOAA recorded warmer than average temperatures throughout the American West, and noted that last year was also the 19 straight year that annual average temperatures have exceeded the 20th century average.

A study published in December found lakes around world—more than half of the world's freshwater supplies—are warming faster than the oceans and the atmosphere. Here at Lake Tahoe, our annual average air and water temperatures have also been increasing.

Climate change was a major topic at Operation Sierra Storm, a conference hosted at Lake Tahoe this January. The annual event brought together meteorologists and weather and climate experts from around the country to talk about climate change. The experts' message was loud and clear: Climate change is occurring and we need to take steps now to prepare and adjust.

Fortunately, we're seeing progress on that front. Nearly 200 nations at the United Nations climate summit in Paris last month agreed to take voluntary steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to fight climate change. Countries are coming together as never before and realizing the need to

work together on climate change.

But we cannot rely on national governments or even state governments to fight the effects of climate change we will see and feel right here at Tahoe. We must work to make our local communities and environment as healthy and resilient as possible. We need to think globally and act locally, and that's exactly what we're doing at Lake Tahoe.

With more frequent and longer dry conditions, fire risk rises. Government agencies around Lake Tahoe are removing hazardous fuels from our forested public lands to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk around our communities. That work is seeing a strong financial boost with \$3 million in grant funding for Tahoe that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management announced this January.

Communities around Lake Tahoe are building trails and bike lanes so people can get to work, school, and shopping and recreation areas without getting in cars. Our work to improve Lake Tahoe's electric vehicle charging infrastructure and create a seamless regional transit system will also pay dividends in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.

Local, state, and federal governments around Lake Tahoe are working on many fronts to address the changing climate and prepare our region for its impacts. But there are many things residents and businesses can do to help. Our award winning Lake Tahoe Sustainability Action Plan identifies many simple steps that individuals can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan is available **online**.

While we enjoy the return of snowfall this winter, let's not lose sight of the bigger challenges we face. Please join our work to make Lake Tahoe's environment and communities more sustainable and prepared for the impacts of a changing climate. Together we can make a difference.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional

Study: Generosity helps lower blood pressure

By Ashley Whillans, Washington Post

Every day, we are confronted with choices about how to spend our money. Whether it's thinking about picking up the tab at a group lunch or when a charity calls asking for a donation, we are faced with the decision to behave generously or not.

Research suggests that spending money on others can improve happiness, but can it also improve your physical health?

There is some evidence that donating time can improve physical health, but no one had looked at whether donating money has the same effect. So my colleagues and I at the University of British Columbia conducted an experiment to find out if spending money on others could lower blood pressure.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Beacon's first snowshoe cocktail race of the season is Jan. 16 at 7pm. Signups are from 5-7pm at the Camp Rich restaurant. For more info, call 530.541.0630.

• Eli Ilano, former deputy forest supervisor of Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, who left for the same job at the Tahoe National Forest in Tahoe City has been named acting forest supervisor for TNF.

• Passaretti's restaurant in South Lake Tahoe is changing hands. Longtime locals Dan and Ty Passaretti are selling to Jeff Sparrow.

• The B4UFLY app has info from the feds about flying drones. For more info, go **online**.

• Visit California, the state tourism agency, is building on its investment in China this week by bringing its China-based team to tour Northern California, including stops at Lake Tahoe, Eureka, Redwood National Park and San Francisco. Chinese travelers spent \$2.24 billion in California in 2014.

Visits, spending up at Vail Resorts' ski areas



The addition of Park City is helping Vail Resorts' bottom line. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Vail Resorts on Wednesday reported climbing visits, and increased season pass sales and visitor spending at its resort network across Colorado, Utah and California.

North America's largest resort operator said lift ticket revenue for the season through Jan. 10 – including season pass sales – was up 19.4 percent over the same period last season. The company said visitor spending at its eight ski areas was increasing as well, with dining revenue up 14.3 percent, ski school revenue up 6.7 percent and retail sales at its resort stores up 9.1 percent.

Vail Resorts chief Rob Katz said the big snow in Tahoe after three seasons of drought is fueling the bounce, alongside “solid revenue growth” in Colorado and “double-digit revenue growth at Park City.”

Read the whole story

Arbor Week poster-video contest open to Calif. students

CalFire and California ReLeaf are sponsoring the annual statewide Arbor Week poster contest for students in 3-5.

Rules and details can be found **online**.

In addition, this year the organizations are also having a new **video contest** for students in grades 6-8.

For each contest, students are asked to create original artwork or video based on the theme Trees & Water: Sources of Life. Submissions are due Feb. 12. Winners will be featured at the State Fair, displayed on the California ReLeaf/CalFire websites, and awarded cash prizes.

The goals of Arbor Week include educating Californians about trees, encouraging tree planting, teaching elementary school children the environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees, and protecting the state's valuable natural resources.

Personalized diet may be the healthier choice

By Kate Murphy, New York Times

In what has come to feel like a twice-a-decade mea culpa, the federal government last week released another revision of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, this time urging many of us to consume less sugar and less protein. The new recommendations may well influence nutrition labeling, school lunches and government assistance programs.

But the advice is likely to be ignored by much of the I'll-have-fries-with-that citizenry. Moreover, recent scientific findings are beginning to lend support to a new approach to diet, one personalized to the individual.

Research increasingly suggests that each of us is unique in the way we absorb and metabolize nutrients. This dawning realization has scientists, and entrepreneurs, scrambling to provide more effective nutritional advice based on such distinguishing factors as genetic makeup, gut bacteria, body type and chemical exposures.

Read the whole story

Sierra Tract to be called Tahoe Sierra in SLT

Because of the research by South Shore resident Judi Allen the subdivision referred to as Sierra Tract in South Lake Tahoe will be changed back to its original name – Tahoe Sierra.

Sierra Tract started to be used when a plan area statement for the neighborhood was adopted.

City officials have indicated they will use the Tahoe Sierra

name going forward where practical to do so, and will use that name for future plan area statements and area plans. Expect to see references to Tahoe Sierra on City Council documents as well.

Will the U.S. Supreme Court gut public-employee unions?

By Garrett Epps, Atlantic

The most important fact about Monday's oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is that this case—one of the most important of the term—will be decided on the basis of no facts at all.

The petitioners in *Friedrichs* are asking the Court to hobble unions that represent more than 9 million public employees in 23 states and the District of Columbia. That decision will have large consequences for those employees, for the states that employ them, and for the political system. But the Court will decide the case without, apparently, serious consideration of those effects.

Representing the challengers, the conservative lawyer Michael Carvin described a public-employee union as a purely political group that “advocates an ideological viewpoint” his clients “do not approve of.” Every single thing a public-employee union does, he said, is a matter of public concern; contract negotiations with teachers' unions, for example, affect class size, teacher promotion policies, and overall state funding—every one of them a hotly contested political issue.

In contrast, the union lawyer David Frederick told the Court that many of the union's activities are "mundane matters" without political content.

Read the whole story

Conference targets small farmers in Nev.

The 10th annual Nevada Small Farm Conference is for farmers and ranchers, beginning or experienced, rural or urban, and business and community members.

It takes place at the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks on Feb. 5-6. Early bird registration is \$85 until Jan. 25, and regular registration is \$95.

Topics range from soils, to beekeeping to raising chickens.

Four morning workshops are offered on Feb. 5: permaculture, beekeeping, Farm2Flask and farm hacks. The conference sessions follow the workshops, covering a variety of topics, including fiber and sheep production, pollinators and beneficials, organic farming, harvest to packaging and more.

Workshops and conference sessions will include candid discussions about the challenges facing producers. Lack of infrastructure, competitive pricing and Nevada's high-desert climate are among the major challenges.

For more info, go **online**.

Time management topic of free seminar

North Tahoe Business Association is hosting a free seminar for businesses titled Time Management for Busy People.

It is Feb. 9 from 8-9:30am at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

The seminar is designed to optimize work-life harmony by:

- Identifying time-wasters and reasons for procrastination
- Discovering if you are “addicted to urgency”
- Getting a perspective on what matters most in your life
- Prioritizing what is important and what is urgent
- Uncovering your prime real estate
- Implementing high impact tips to beat the clock
- Exercising integrity in the moment of choice.

The seminar will be taught by business coach and nationally known speaker Laura Moriarty, president of Tahoe Training Partners.

Complimentary continental breakfast is provided to seminar attendees who register before Feb. 5. For more information, call 530.546.9000.